

## Ukrainian Translations: Releasing from Russian Cultural Expansion

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### Abstract

This manuscript gives an outline of Ukrainian translations of the latter 20th century as well as their interrelationship with the literary process of the abovementioned period. The study aims to define the translator's place in the Ukrainian literary context with a focus on the Ukrainian language as a part of national culture and a keystone to recognize national identity. It reveals the philosophical and aesthetic background and its impact on forming the aesthetic canon of the Ukrainian prose translations which had for long been under the pressure of Russian translation schools. Based on the analysis of English prose translations and, in particular, unique materials collected in private archives and publishing funds, the research highlights the concepts of translation presented in the works of Rostislav Dotsenko, who proves to be one of the most outstanding representatives of Ukrainian Translation School.

**Keywords:** Ukrainian language, Ukrainian translators, national identity, linguicide, translation

### Introduction

Political and social issues facing Ukrainian society in the second half of the 20th century were accentuated on the necessity to build up a totally new "construction," completely deprived of the dogmas "<...of social realism" ...> and <... "Cultural insularity" ...> (Pavlenko, 2014, p. 22) with the acknowledgment of the Ukrainian language as a powerful tool to assert national identity and, in a broader sense, national culture as a whole. The frame of reference covering the period mentioned opens the possibility to view the challenges to be tackled and, in particular, create a new cultural background for its further recognition and development. In this context, we accentuate the importance of the Ukrainian language as a part of national culture, a keystone to recognize the national identity, and in a broader sense, Ukrainian national culture as a whole. Owing to the fact that all these processes came to be realized under the conditions of Russian dominance (the so-called phenomenon of "linguicide" (Pavlenko, 2014), we particularly appreciate the idea of the "powerful relationship between identity and language" that appears to be of central concern to many scholars in the field of studies of language influence (Buryak, 2022; Hubscher-Davidson, 2014; Moskalenko, 2006; Norton, 2010; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004).

The data has been more fully discussed in publications of Ukrainian researchers regarding the problem in question (Bilorus et al., 2018; Dotsenko, 2013; Pavlenko, 2014; Strikha, 2006) in which they give prospects to analyze Ukrainian through the "lens of other European languages and other national cultures" (Moskalenko, 2006). Furthermore, the abovementioned problem, when considered from a historical perspective, came to be perceived by a huge 'burst' of Ukrainian translations (not Russian ones dominating within the period mentioned) which have slickly

entered the Ukrainian cultural context and helped to form the Ukrainian national identity. Thus, Ukrainian versions of world-recognized English and American writers broke the outside assessment of the Ukrainian language as "a tool for domestic use" (Strikha, 2006, p. 37). Among the ones who contributed greatly to the abovementioned processes were H. Kochur, M. Lukash, R. Dotsenko, Yu. Lisniak, V. Mitrofanov, M. Dmytrenko, V. Mysyk, Ye. Popovych, O. Senyuk, O. Terekh, D. Palamarchuk, O. Mokrovolsky, V. Shovkun and others.

### Objectives

The research is conducted with the objective of outlining the factors that had an impact on the Ukrainian literary process of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as well as defining the active functioning of Ukrainian translations in the national literary space in accordance with ideological and thematic renewal, spiritual enrichment and genre and style variety.

### Methodology

This research was carried out at the English Language department of Mariupol State University, Ukraine, in November-December 2022. The manuscript provides a complex application of a variety of research methods including historical-literary, comparative-historical, descriptive, sociological and cultural-historical ones. Among the utmost literary translation productivity proves to be the method of "proportional projection" (Dotsenko, 2013), which illuminates a number of problems of transcultural transformations of various national achievements, testifying to a new type of their interaction through rethinking the role of Ukrainian literature and in particular, Ukrainian translations in the

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global cultural context. As Strikha puts it, “the combination of plot projections of the past, present and future in the translations of the period in question illustrates a certain dispersal of their narrative structure” (Strikha, 2006, p. 51). The combination of plot projections of the past, present and future in the translations of the period in question illustrates a certain diversity of their narrative structure. This is especially noticeable in a time of crisis, when, due to linguistic ethnocide, the national culture underwent numerous deformations and was reduced to the level of a provincial subculture with a “chronic lack of many links and functions” (Dotsenko, 2013, p. 31). As the analyzed material convinces, the genre-style picture of Ukrainian translations of English-language prose not only actualized modernist trends based on general humanistic ideas, rethinking the ontological and anthropological state of the existing reality, but also confirmed the idea to combine modern form narrative and national-folk tradition. The represented concept is correlated with the motivational approach, in which motivation is considered an integrative category of the translator’s cognitive choice.

The projection of Ukrainian translators’ artistic and aesthetic experience onto the situation limited by the “dependency/choice” framework represents them as active contributors to the national literary process. In particular, for Dotsenko, this is defined not only in the motivated selection of works for translation but also in the principles he displayed in the original. His translation and literary practice, defined by the high moral and imperative dimension of the period, became the native marker of the renewal of the theory of Ukrainian translation, the embodiment of the most complex intellectual visions capable of covering distant cultural horizons.

### Results

The place and role of Rostislav Dotsenko in the artistic paradigm of Ukrainian literature of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are clarified through the artist’s philosophical “internal” discourse, unfolded at the level of intuition and entered the author’s consciousness as a scientifically generalized philosophical reflection of existentialism. The need to feel and understand one’s time, “not leaving it” but moving towards modernity, had a significant impact on the formation of Dotsenko’s aesthetic platform, is characterized by a certain disbalance between his own “Self” and the “Other” (society) with its socio-political realities of the period analyzed. A general overview of translations of English-language prose of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century reveals certain (stable and dynamic) trends and the main regularities of the development of the translation process in Ukraine, determined by historical and political factors that identify the nature of these translations and proved their effectiveness and popularity.

study of definite articles, on the basis of both formal and notional criteria, with a focus on European languages. In contrast to earlier contributions to this topic and to recent, more comprehensive typological studies, more attention will be paid to

(i) the problems of providing a clear semantic basis for the comparison and (ii) the reconstruction of plausible historical developments, following the leads of Greenberg (1990) and others. In addition to developing a more fine-grained ty-pology of definite articles, the paper will also show that, even in the restricted area of Europe, we find a remarkable diversity in the meaning and use of definite articles.

### Discussion

Philosophical and aesthetic musts for the phenomenon in question that this research focuses on outlines the role of literary translation on the critical cultural discourse of the period mentioned. They proved to have appeared in the Ukrainian literary arena to demonstrate a new vision of social renewal marked by strong opposition to the existing Soviet regime and create the platform for “<... “global extension of the Ukrainian Word”...> (Pavlenko, 2017, p. 105). Their works ruined the incessant conventional beliefs based on the strict observation of the totalitarian communist regime with the utmost desire to proclaim liberty and social freedoms covering the scope of renewal of all forms of social life in a broad social context. They really

represented a totally different intellectual elite with the key objectives based on <... “search for “truth” and “recognizing own individuality” ...> (Strikha, 2006, p. 47) as well as <... forms of artistic self-expression “...> breaking the <... “canons of socialist realism in literature” ...> (Tarnashynska, 2013, p. 58).

The key role in this process comes to be assigned to the Ukrainian scholar, literary critic, editor a translator Rostislav Dotsenko, whose works, without a doubt, <... “come to be considered as a powerful reserve of national revival” ...> (Bilorus et al., 2018 p. 34). His heritage contains a respectable register of articles on language and culture, translation studies, reviews and prefaces focusing mainly on cultural aspects of translation and its influence on the readers’ comprehension performance. As the author of translations, mainly represented by a wide range of works from English and American literature of various literary genres (novels, short stories, plays, poems, etc.) by Dickens, Faulkner, Cooper, Stevenson, Poe, Twain, Lawrence, Mitchell, Bradbury and others his works proved to represent a competitive basis to the existing Russian versions of the abovementioned period. His colleagues regarded him <... “a brilliant translator...>, <... a virtuoso of the artistic word ...>, <... a dedicated researcher of Ukrainian literature both at home and in the diaspora” ...> (Bilorus et al., 2018, p. 45). He did his best so that everything worth considering in the original text was not lost, thus making his translated versions “congenial in spirit, time and style (Bilorus et al., 2018, p. 51). He proved the commonly recognized idea (not theoretically but in practice) by being a co-author to create an adequate atmosphere for the author of the original. All his translations were not dependent on the “<...fluctuations in market prices for the Ukrainian literature of the period” ...> (Bilorus et al., 2018, p. 47). The sense of the most precise stylistics being represented in the word nuances and shades of the original work (hidden smile or ominous, brutal, desperate, creepy notes in the language features of the characters, the atmosphere of the approach of inevitable tragic denouement, etc.) created a whimsical and at the same time exemplary organic, almost femininely fragile, and as Adamenko put it, “<...an artistic fabric, rich in exquisite turns of thought, linguistic discoveries and surprises” ...> (Bilorus et al., 2018 p. 48).

The “<... firework scatters” ...> (Bilorus et al., 2018, p. 47) were brilliantly reproduced in Dotsenko’s translation of Wilde’s original work “The Picture of Dorian Grey” released in 1968. Since then, as his colleague and translator Kornienko put it, “these features of the pen have not disappeared and attracted magnetically in a new translated thing or a literary and critical work, promising a minor readership festival. If it comes to being accurate that the essential mark of literature is freshness and brilliance, then Dotsenko is an artist from head to toe” (Vynnychuk, 2022).

Being always in a constant creative search, the translator not only popularizes the literature of foreign countries but also improves his native language gaps available (Pavlenko, 2017). A recognized expert of the Ukrainian language, a staunch and faithful champion of the language culture, together with its fabulous and thorough values, Dotsenko provides the reader with opportunities to draw linguistic and stylistic bounties disseminated on the pages of his works” (Bilorus et al., 2018 p. 47).

In this context, another Ukrainian writer Vinnychuk notes: “If any of my readers want to get to know the Ukrainian language better, in addition to reading the classics, I highly recommend Ukrainian translations made in the 1960s, in particular

Dotsenko’s translations by Faulkner” (Vynnychuk, 2022). On reading it, “you always enrich yourself, filling in annoying gaps in your own means of expression, and most importantly, you proved to be immersed in a true native Ukrainian atmosphere (Bilorus et al., 2018, p. 49). Next, the author provides a list of neologisms, the translator’s “linguistic pearls,” e. g. “slide” (ricochet), “warred,” “anu-no”, anu-here – there,” “rot,” “inside and outside,” and others. Extraordinary freshness is provided by unworn syntactic constructions and inflections, organic interspersions of the most familiar “glittering words, touched by some impenetrable breath of democracy” (Dotsenko, 2013, p. 178), “he didn’t have a pretty face” instead of using neutral: “not so good”; “an icy blow hit the skull instead of the usual “hit” (Dotsenko, 2013, p. 178).

On dipping into the depths of Dotsenko's language array as well as carefully studying each of the words, Kornienko notes, in particular: "The source transparency of the syntax also became a model for me, as well as and that equilibrist, sense of balance, measure and rhythm of the phrase of the entire text (Moskalenko, 2006, p. 178). Consequently, as a writer and editor, "he can strive for such a variety of linguistic and stylistic colors, remaining within the framework of established stencils" (Moskalenko, 2006, p. 178).

Numerous critical remarks and speeches on the pages of Rostislav's periodicals, in particular, his comments on the "ecology of Ukrainian culture" (Pavlenko, 2017, p. 105), directed against its planned annihilation and destruction in the conditions of a pseudo-state existence. Accordingly, in his memories of his closest friend regarding his attitude to the problems of the Ukrainian language, Belorus puts: "His indignation with brutal attempts to drive away the Russian clerical style that existed as according to the canon, he established it with light irony, or even sarcasm and scientific argumentation" (Bilorus et al., 2018p.49). Thus, in the magazine article where the materials were published under the collective pseudonym "Ivan Schanuy Slovo" Dotsenko demonstrated a surprisingly careful attitude to the vocabulary of the Ukrainian language that pushed him to carry out its scientific reconstruction.

A sharply negative review of the fifth edition of the "Dictionary for schoolchildren," edited by Stefantsev provided by him, says, "Those who did not speak Ukrainian (this is evidenced by the preface to the dictionary), filling the register of the dictionary with the combination of Russian and Ukrainian words reasoned the closure of the created section of the magazine. However, specific proposals were made by Dotsenko's comments regarding the introduction of a state program to publish dictionaries and publishing houses contributed to the qualitative growth of Ukrainian lexicography.

In his review article "Language Fluency" marked by Dotsenko's indignation of Soviet ideological censorship, in particular by drawing a sharp political accent, which was further written in the preface and accentuated on the sad state of linguistics in Ukraine. In fact, the situation comes to be much worse and so alarming that it worries many researchers involved in Ukrainian culture, despite the fact that "now Ukraine is feeling the intensification of Moscow's terror. Below we reprint the article by Rostyslav Dotsenko. In our opinion, the problem raised in that article should be of interest to those Ukrainian linguists who live abroad" (Dotsenko, 2013, p. 297) and thus, come to be topical in the current situation for Ukrainian cultural space. Since the 1960s, ideological censorship and "competent authorities" greatly concerned with quantitative and qualitative growth of Ukrainian translated literature that was printed on the pages of the magazine "Vsesvit," initiated a campaign to combat the "clogging" of translations with "outdated, colloquial, dialectal" ("nationalistic") vocabulary. According to those nominated by them due to the requirements, the works of foreign authors must be translated only within the limits of the standard literary (official) dictionary, using a literal translation, with a complete leveling of the linguistic and artistic stylistics of the original text. Such was a side discussion that did not accept reviews with any counterarguments for publication. Despite all these, Dotsenko made a lot of efforts, trying to expand the range of the Ukrainian word as much as possible so that "Ukrainian word could become "at par with the official simplifiers" of the Ukrainian language" (Bilorus et al., 2018, p. 94).

Starting with the characteristics of Dotsenko's artistic style and critical comments regarding the translation made by Pinchevskyi (deformations, as well as gaps in the portraying artistic and stylistic features of the original), Dotsenko enters into a lively discussion with official spokesmen who acted as apologists for the identity of the literary language and the language of translated fiction. Relying on recognized world authorities in the specified field, he emphasizes, in particular, that "departing from the norm is the final condition of all poetry" and following "disputes and debates" in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine and the KGB, Belorus testifies, that "they moved back "KGB Organs," thus in 1972, causing a new wave of repression Dotsenko fell under. This time the translator was accused of excessive archaism and "clogging" of the Ukrainian language. This was proved, in particular, in the report published in 2013 by Ovsienko

on the website "Virtual museum: dissident movement in Ukraine" in the "Research section (from 28 December 1972). The head of the republican KGB, Fedorchuk complained Volodymyr Shcherbytskyi, the ex-general secretary of Ukraine which he exposed the "subversive activities" of Dotsenko as a translator and editor who cooperated with Ivan Dzyuba, Anatol Perepadya, Mykola Lukash, Hryhoriy Kochur, Oleksiy Sinychenko. The paper says that "editing his translations, Dotsenko jumbles the Ukrainian language with archaisms and dialects explaining it by the fact that he is supposed to modernize the Ukrainian language which is not relevant as is a photographic reflection of Russian, and later needs to return to the traditions of the 20s" (Ovsienko, 2013).

Further, the message contains another accusation: "Dotsenko strives to translate and proliferate the works of those foreign writers who, in the eyes of progressive humanity, have compromised themselves with a hostile attitude towards Marxist-Leninism philosophy. In this regard, he published an article in the magazine

"Faulkner was approaching the writer's style." As it was known, Soviet critics condemned Faulkner as a renegade as he broke the dogmas of the communist regime and repeatedly made anti-Soviet statements" (Ovsienko, 2013). The crisis of personality and the devaluation of human values in modern society, which came to be the main topic of the writer's novels, the Soviet system interpreted as the most striking signs of the "decline of the West."

Dotsenko introduces the real Faulkner to the Ukrainian reader from the writer's psychological worldview, philosophical and humanistic concept of art as a "reflection of commonly recognized philosophical issues of truth, love, honor, pride, compassion and self-sacrifice" (Pavlenko, 2017, p. 100).

The main idea of human morality is defined in the writer's novel "The Intruder in the Dust," admitting that "there are things that you will never stop tolerating. Things you are always forced to refuse to endure injustice, humiliation, shame, and oppression" (Pavlenko, 2014, p.24). Dotsenko is attracted by the complexity of Faulkner's composition, the detective nature of the plot, a specific solution to the problems of time and space, as well as grotesque and symbolism as dominant means of the writer's artistic generalization. The translator acts according to certain pragmatic rules, paying attention to the conditions that "depend on the social status of the speakers, on the communicative constellation and on the type of communicative act and nature of the text" (Dotsenko, 2013, p. 208) It is primarily about the "hidden," "restrictive" or "prohibitive-presuppositional" semes that create prerequisites, necessary for adequate use of the language unit" (Dotsenko, 2013, p. 2010).

Working on the translation, Dotsenko takes into account not only personal but also social relations determined by the place of the speaker in social life. The translator's creative discovery comes to be an incomplete metaphorical equivalent of the nickname reproduced in a more specific meaning: "How's that for an idea? Huh, Sugar boy" (Faulkner, 1962, p. 129) – "How about you like it, huh, Sweetheart?" (Faulkner, 1962, p.130), as well as a complete metonymic equivalent: "Morning, boys, 'he said... Howdy? Jefferson" (Faulkner, 1962, p. 129) – "The guys were healthy, "he said... "How, how are you, Jefferson? (Faulkner, 1962, p. 129). As seen, with the help of full equivalents, the translator forms greetings in the given passage, and their differential features are preserved, where the spatial form represents a higher degree of familiarity. The differentiation of the specified forms of greeting has also been preserved in the language characteristics of the white boy McWillie from Faulkner's novel "The Reivers," which emphasizes the familiar attitude of the main character to the older Negro Poshem, a distorted name which was successfully reproduced by means of transcription and ironic, emphatically polite attitude when addressing a man younger than him and expressed using the full equivalents: "Hidy, Uncle Possum, morning, reverend" "How are you, Uncle Possum? Good morning, dear" (Faulkner, 1962, p. 130).

In this regard, we compare the question: "Howdy, Mr. Mmccaslin" (Faulkner, 1962, p. 130) reproduced in the translation as "Good afternoon, Mr. McCaslin" (Faulkner, 1962, p.130). For a Ukrainian reader, the familiar form would not sound like a nineteen-year-old boy addressing an elderly man. Such a translation choice, in our view, is due not only to the difference in

semantics but also to a different distribution of a familiar form, which comes to be more in line with the phrases "How are you? How do you feel?" (Faulkner, 1962, p.130).

In order to achieve full compliance with the original text, the translator sometimes detracts a full equivalent, which would strike a Ukrainian reader with its unusualness, as shown, in particular, in the children's greeting of an unfamiliar, older person: "Hellow! Hellow!" (Faulkner, 1962, p. 131). "Hey! Hey!" (Faulkner, 1962, p. 131). In this context, Dotsenko took into account extralinguistic factors (the cry came from far away and no longer acted as a greeting).

As known, when reproducing colloquialisms in another language, translators usually apply their compensation. Dotsenko skillfully made up for the loss when translating the spatial greeting by means of colloquial equivalent, using the spatial form of address: "Hidy, son" and "Hello, brother" (Faulkner, 1962, p. 132).

A constituent part of Dotsenko's translation context, directly connected with the deepest fundamentals of world culture, prove to be his translations of Irish literature. According to him, the fate of this country is closely connected with the challenges Ukraine of the period in question faced. Since, Irish literature has acquired a special status for Dotsenko that was further represented in his translated versions and released in the anthology of Irish short stories, which included more than fifty works by Irish authors. The translator skillfully recreated the Ukrainian version of Brian Friel's play "Honorable Citizens," one of the novels of Walter Meekin's historical trilogy "In Search of the Promised Land" (in co-authorship with Emil Khomenko) about the bloody defeat of the Irish liberation struggle in the middle of the 17th century. The translation has not yet been published; we only have a small extract from it with the translator's preface in the historical journal "Antiquities."

Dotsenko acted as a compiler, as well as translated and published two collections of Irish folklore with his preface "Irish folk sayings and proverbs" (1982) and "Tales of the Emerald Isle" (1987). In his article about Ireland, he focuses on a number of parallels to the phenomena of Irish history from its own past – in particular, touching upon the issue of the relationships between the metropolis and its colonies. In his works, he depicts the struggle of the conquered people and the revival of their national culture and self-awareness. "In the very mentality of the Irish and Ukrainians," as Dotsenko puts it, "there are striking analogies between the two cultures, identified by hard work and lyricism as traits of the national character, as well as the values of narrative and song folklore in the fight against foreign invasion" (Dotsenko, 2013, p. 392). His dedication to Irish literature affected the translation of Irish fairy tales ("The well in the land of the End of the World," "Jack and the King, famous for his education," "Lazy beauty," etc.), as well as the collection of proverbs and sayings. According to the translator, "in an Irish fairy tale, one can often hear the living voice of the narrator, who either accidentally drops a humorous hint, or directly address the listeners" (Dotsenko, 2013, p. 392).

### Conclusion

In the context of artistic creativity, Ukrainian translations underwent significant meaning-making transformations, testifying to substantial changes that occurred both at the coherent level (correlativity according to semantic parameters) and at the level of cohesion (correlation of images, genre features, stylistic devices, etc.). Peculiar markers of these transformations proved to be the elements of the new content – historical, social, and ideological, which, being introduced into the semantic field of the primary source, gradually lead to its reformatting. This gives grounds for asserting that the selection of works for translation has a cause-and-effect nature which defines the relationship between the source and target text (approach/distance, affinity/difference). These can be traced in Dotsenko's translations that raised the Ukrainian language to a new level of functioning as well as its further endorsement and development. The updating of artistic forms and introduction of new artistic methodology traced in his translations were characterized by romantic humanism, accompanied by insights into human nature and realistic reflection of reality released from formalism and social realism dogmas. His

philosophical considerations and literary argumentations contributed greatly not only to the reinforcement of the Ukrainian translation tradition but also proved to be a certain breakthrough that manifested a revival of Ukrainian translations as well as opened the prospects for their worldwide recognition.

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